

**Congregation for Divine Worship and
the Discipline of the Sacraments**

Inculturation and the Roman Liturgy

Instruction



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Congregation for Divine Worship
and the Discipline of the Sacraments

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of the authentic cultural values
by their integration into Christianity
and the implantation of Christianity into different human cultures.*

...

*By inculturation the church makes the Gospel
incarnate in different cultures
and at the same time introduces peoples,
together with their cultures,
into her own community.*

...

*Coming into contact with different cultures,
the church must welcome
all that can be reconciled with the Gospel
in the tradition of a people
to bring to it the riches of Christ
and to be enriched in turn
by the many different forms of wisdom
of the nations of the earth.*

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Contents

Introduction / 1

- A. Nature of This Instruction / 1
- B. Preliminary Observations / 1

I. Process of Inculturation Throughout the History of Salvation / 2

II. Requirements and Preliminary Conditions for Liturgical Inculturation / 4

- A. Requirements Emerging from the Nature of the Liturgy / 4
- B. Preliminary Conditions for Inculturation of the Liturgy / 5
- C. The Responsibility of the Episcopal Conference / 5

III. Principles and Practical Norms for Inculturation of the Roman Rite / 6

- A. General Principles / 6
- B. Adaptations Which Can Be Made / 6
- C. Necessary Prudence / 7

IV. Areas of Adaptation in the Roman Rite / 8

- A. Adaptations in the Liturgical Books / 8
- B. Adaptations Envisaged By No. 40 of the Conciliar Constitution
on the Liturgy / 9

Conclusion / 10

Introduction

1. Legitimate differences in the Roman rite were allowed in the past and were foreseen by the Second Vatican Council in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, especially in the missions.¹ "Even in the liturgy the church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters that do not affect the faith or the good of the whole community."² It has known and still knows many different forms and liturgical families, and considers that this diversity, far from harming her unity, underlines its value.³

2. In his apostolic letter *Vicesimus Quintus*

Annus, the Holy Father Pope John Paul II described the attempt to make the liturgy take root in different cultures as an important task for liturgical renewal.⁴ This work was foreseen in earlier instructions and in liturgical books, and it must be followed up in the light of experience, welcoming where necessary cultural values "which are compatible with the true and authentic spirit of the liturgy, always respecting the substantial unity of the Roman rite as expressed in the liturgical books."⁵

A. Nature of This Instruction

3. By order of the supreme pontiff, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has prepared this instruction: The norms for the adaptation of the liturgy to the temperament and conditions of different peoples, which were given in Articles 37-40 of the constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, are here defined; certain principles expressed in general terms in those articles are explained more precisely, the directives are set out in a more appropriate way and the order to be followed is clearly set out, so that in future this will be considered the only correct procedure. Since the theological principles

relating to questions of faith and inculturation have still to be examined in depth, this congregation wishes to help bishops and episcopal conferences to consider or put into effect, according to the law, such adaptations as are already foreseen in the liturgical books; to re-examine critically arrangements that have already been made; and if in certain cultures pastoral need requires that form of adaptation of the liturgy which the constitution calls "more profound" and at the same time considers "more difficult," to make arrangements for putting it into effect in accordance with the law.

B. Preliminary Observations

4. The constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* spoke of the different forms of liturgical adaptation.⁶ Subsequently the magisterium of the church has used the term *inculturation* to define more precisely "the incarnation of the Gospel in autonomous cultures and at the same time the introduction of these cultures into the life of the church."⁷ Inculturation signifies "an intimate transformation of the authentic cultural values by their integration into Christianity and the implantation of Christianity into different human cultures."⁸

The change of vocabulary is understandable, even in the liturgical sphere. The expression *adaptation*, taken from missionary terminology, could lead one to think of modifications of a somewhat transitory and external nature.⁹ The term *inculturation* is a better expression to design-

nate a double movement: "By inculturation, the church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community."¹⁰ On the one hand the penetration of the Gospel into a given sociocultural milieu "gives inner fruitfulness to the spiritual qualities and gifts proper to each people ..., strengthens these qualities, perfects them and restores them in Christ."¹¹

On the other hand, the church assimilates these values, when they are compatible with the Gospel, "to deepen understanding of Christ's message and give it more effective expression in the liturgy and in the many different aspects of the life of the community of believers."¹² This double movement in the work of inculturation thus expresses one of the component elements of the

mystery of the incarnation.¹³

5. Inculturation thus understood has its place in worship as in other areas of the life of the church.¹⁴ It constitutes one of the aspects of the inculturation of the Gospel, which calls for true integration¹⁵ in the life of faith of each people of the permanent values of a culture, rather than their transient expressions. It must, then, be in full solidarity with a much greater action, a unified pastoral strategy which takes account of the human situation.¹⁶ As in all forms of the work of evangelization, this patient and complex undertaking calls for methodical research and ongoing discernment.¹⁷ The inculturation of the Christian life and of liturgical celebrations must be the fruit of a progressive maturity in the faith of the people.¹⁸

6. The present instruction has different situations in view. There are in the first place those countries which do not have a Christian tradition or where the Gospel has been proclaimed in modern times by missionaries who brought the Roman rite with them. It is now more evident that "coming into contact with different cultures, the church must welcome all that can be reconciled with the Gospel in the tradition of a people to bring to it the riches of Christ and to be en-

riched in turn by the many different forms of wisdom of the nations of the earth."¹⁹

7. The situation is different in the countries with a long-standing Western Christian tradition, where the culture has already been penetrated for a long time by the faith and the liturgy expressed in the Roman rite. That has helped the welcome given to liturgical reform in these countries, and the measures of adaptation envisaged in the liturgical books were considered, on the whole, sufficient to allow for legitimate local diversity (cf. below Nos. 53-61). In some countries, however, where several cultures coexist, especially as a result of immigration, it is necessary to take account of the particular problems which this poses (cf. below No. 49).

8. It is necessary to be equally attentive to the progressive growth both in countries with a Christian tradition and in others of a culture marked by indifference or disinterest in religion.²⁰ In the face of this situation, it is not so much a matter of inculturation, which assumes that there are pre-existent religious values and evangelizes them, but rather a matter of insisting on liturgical formation²¹ and finding the most suitable means to reach spirits and hearts.

I. Process of Inculturation Throughout the History of Salvation

9. Light is shed upon the problems being posed about the inculturation of the Roman rite in the history of salvation. The process of inculturation was a process which developed in many ways.

The people of Israel throughout its history preserved the certain knowledge that it was the chosen people of God, the witness of his action and love in the midst of the nations. It took from neighboring peoples certain forms of worship, but its faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob subjected these borrowings to profound modifications, principally changes of significance but also often changes in the form, as it incorporated these elements into its religious practice in order to celebrate the memory of God's wonderful deeds in its history.

The encounter between the Jewish world and Greek wisdom gave rise to a new form of inculturation: the translation of the Bible into Greek introduced the word of God into a world that had

been closed to it and caused, under divine inspiration, an enrichment of the Scriptures.

10. "The law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms" (cf. Lk.24:27 and 44) was a preparation for the coming of the Son of God upon earth. The Old Testament, comprising the life and culture of the people of Israel, is also the history of salvation.

On coming to the earth the Son of God, "born of a woman, born under the law" (Gal. 4:4), associated himself with social and cultural conditions of the people of the alliance, with whom he lived and prayed.²² In becoming a man he became a member of a people, a country and an epoch "and in a certain way, he thereby united himself to the whole human race."²³ For "we are all one in Christ, and the common nature of our humanity takes life in him. It is for this that he was called the 'new Adam.'"²⁴

11. Christ, who wanted to share our human condition (cf. Heb. 2:14), died for all in order to

gather into unity the scattered children of God (cf. Jn. 11:52). By his death he wanted to break down the wall of separation between mankind, to make Israel and the nations one people. By the power of his resurrection he drew all people to himself and created out of them a single new man (cf. Eph. 2:14-16; Jn. 12:32). In him a new world has been born (cf. 2 Cor. 5:16-17), and everyone can become a new creature. In him, darkness has given place to light, promise became reality and all the religious aspirations of humanity found their fulfillment. By the offering that he made of his body, once for all (cf. Heb. 10:10), Christ Jesus brought about the fullness of worship in spirit and in truth in the renewal which he wished for his disciples (cf. Jn. 4:23-24).

12. "In Christ ... the fullness of divine worship has come to us."²⁵ In him we have the high priest, taken from among men (cf. Heb. 5:15; 10:19-21), put to death in the flesh but brought to life in the spirit (cf. 1 Pt. 3:18). As Christ and Lord, he has made out of the new people "a kingdom of priests for God his Father" (cf. Rv. 1:6; 5:9-10).²⁶ But before inaugurating by the shedding of his blood the paschal mystery,²⁷ which constitutes the essential element of Christian worship,²⁸ Christ wanted to institute the eucharist, the memorial of his death and resurrection, until he comes again. Here is to be found the fundamental principle of Christian liturgy and the kernel of its ritual expression.

13. At the moment of his going to his Father, the risen Christ assures his disciples of his presence and sends them to proclaim the Gospel to the whole of creation, to make disciples of all nations and baptize them (cf. Mt. 28:15; Mk. 16:15; Acts 1:8). On the day of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit created a new community within the human race, uniting all in spite of the differences of language, which were a sign of division (cf. Acts 2:1-11). Henceforth the wonders of God will be made known to people of every language and culture (cf. Acts 10:44-48). Those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and united in fraternal communion (cf. Acts 2:42) are called from "every tribe, language, people and nation" (cf. Rv. 5:9).

14. Faith in Christ offers to all nations the possibility of being beneficiaries of the promise and of sharing in the heritage of the people of the covenant (cf. Eph. 3:6), without renouncing their culture. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, following the example of St. Peter (cf. Acts 10), St. Paul opened the doors of the church, not keeping the Gospel within the restrictions of the Mosaic law but keeping what he himself had received of the tradition which came from the

Lord (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). Thus, from the beginning, the church did not demand of converts who were uncircumcised "anything beyond what was necessary" according to the decision of the apostolic assembly of Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:28).

"The church of Rome adopted in its liturgy the living language of the people, first Greek and then Latin and, like other Latin Churches, accepted into its worship important events of social life and gave them a Christian significance.... The Roman rite has known how to integrate texts, chants, gestures and rites from various sources and to adapt itself in local cultures in mission territories, even if at certain periods a desire for liturgical uniformity obscured this fact."

15. In gathering together to break the bread on the first day of the week, which became the day of the Lord (cf. Acts 20:7; Rv. 1:10), the first Christian communities followed the command of Jesus who, in the context of the memorial of the Jewish pasch, instituted the memorial of his passion. In continuity with the unique history of salvation, they spontaneously took the forms and texts of Jewish worship and adapted them to express the radical newness of Christian worship.²⁹ Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, discernment was exercised between what could be kept and what was to be discarded of the Jewish heritage of worship.

16. The spread of the Gospel in the world gave rise to other types of ritual in the churches coming from the gentiles, under the influence of different cultural traditions. Under the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit, discernment was exercised to distinguish those elements coming from "pagan" cultures which were incompatible with Christianity from those which could be accepted in harmony with apostolic tradition and in fidelity to the Gospel of salvation.

17. The creation and the development of the forms of Christian celebration developed gradually according to local conditions in the great cultural areas where the good news was proclaimed. Thus were born distinct liturgical families of the churches of the West and of the East. Their rich patrimony preserves faithfully the Christian tradition in its fullness.³⁰ The church of

the West has sometimes drawn elements of its liturgy from the patrimony of the liturgical families of the East.³¹ The church of Rome adopted in its liturgy the living language of the people, first Greek and then Latin, and, like other Latin churches, accepted into its worship important events of social life and gave them a Christian significance. During the course of the centuries, the Roman rite has known how to integrate texts, chants, gestures and rites from various sources³² and to adapt itself in local cultures in mission territories,³³ even if at certain periods a desire for liturgical uniformity obscured this fact.

18. In our own time, the Second Vatican Council recalled that the church "fosters and assumes the ability, resources and customs of each people. In assuming them, the church purifies, strengthens and ennobles them.... Whatever good lies latent in the religious practices and cultures of diverse peoples, it is not only saved from destruction but it is also cleansed, raised up and made perfect unto the glory of God, the confounding of the devil, and the happiness of mankind."³⁴ So the liturgy of the church must not be foreign to any country, people or individual, and at the same time it should transcend the particularity of race and nation. It must be capable of expressing itself in every human culture, all the while maintaining its identity through fidelity to the tradition which comes to it from the Lord.³⁵

19. The liturgy, like the Gospel, must respect cultures, but at the same time invite them to purify and sanctify themselves.

In adhering to Christ by faith, the Jews remained faithful to the Old Testament, which led to Jesus, the Messiah of Israel; they knew that he had fulfilled the Mosaic alliance, as the mediator

of the new and eternal covenant, sealed in his blood on the cross. They knew that, by his one perfect sacrifice, he is the authentic high priest and the definitive temple (cf. Heb. 6-10), and the prescriptions of circumcision (cf. Gal. 5:1-6), the Sabbath (cf. Mt. 12:8 and similar),³⁶ and the sacrifices of the temple (cf. Heb. 10) became of only relative significance.

In a more radical way Christians coming from paganism had to renounce idols, myths, superstitions (cf. Acts 19:18-19; 1 Cor. 10:14-22; 2:20-22; 1 Jn. 5:21) when they adhered to Christ.

But whatever their ethnic or cultural origin, Christians have to recognize the promise, the prophecy and the history of their salvation in the history of Israel. They must accept as the word of God the books of the Old Testament as well as those of the New.³⁷ They welcome the sacramental signs, which can only be understood fully in the context of Holy Scripture and the life of the church.³⁸

20. The challenge which faced the first Christians, whether they came from the chosen people or from a pagan background, was to reconcile the renunciations demanded by faith in Christ with fidelity to the culture and traditions of the people to which they belonged.

And so it will be for Christians of all times, as the words of St. Paul affirm: "We proclaim Christ crucified, scandal for the Jews, foolishness for the pagans" (1 Cor. 1:23).

The discernment exercised during the course of the church's history remains necessary, so that through the liturgy the work of salvation accomplished by Christ may continue faithfully in the church by the power of the Spirit in different countries and times and in different human cultures.

II. Requirements and Preliminary Conditions for Liturgical Inculturation

A. Requirements Emerging from the Nature of the Liturgy

21. Before any research on inculturation begins, it is necessary to keep in mind the nature of the liturgy. It "is, in fact, the privileged place where Christians meet God and the one whom he has sent, Jesus Christ" (cf. Jn. 17:3).³⁹ It is at once the action of Christ the priest and the action of the church which is his body, because in order to accomplish his work of glorifying God and sanctifying mankind, achieved through visible

signs, he always associates with himself the church, which, through him and in the Holy Spirit, gives the Father the worship which is pleasing to him.⁴⁰

22. The nature of the liturgy is intimately linked up with the nature of the church; indeed, it is above all in the liturgy that the nature of the church is manifested.⁴¹ Now the church has specific characteristics which distinguish it from

every other assembly and community.

It is not gathered together by a human decision, but is called by God in the Holy Spirit and responds in faith to his gratuitous call (*ekklesia* derives from *klesis*, "call"). This singular characteristic of the church is revealed by its coming together as a priestly people, especially on the Lord's day, by the word which God addresses to his people and by the ministry of the priest, who through the sacrament of orders acts in the person of Christ the head.⁴²

By baptism all become children of God and form in Christ Jesus one people where "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28). Thus church is called to gather all peoples, to speak the languages, to penetrate all cultures.

Because it is catholic, the church overcomes the barriers which divide humanity: By baptism all become children of God and form in Christ Jesus one people where "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28). Thus church is called to gather all peoples, to speak the languages, to penetrate all cultures.

Finally, the church is a pilgrim on the earth far from the Lord (cf. 2 Cor. 5:6): It bears the marks of the present time in the sacraments and in its institutions, but is waiting in joyful hope for the coming of Jesus Christ (cf. Ti. 2:13).⁴³ This is expressed in the prayers of petition: It shows that we are citizens of heaven (cf. Phil. 3:20), at the same time attentive to the needs of mankind and of society (cf. 1 Tm. 2:1-4).

23. The church is nourished on the word of God written in the Old and New Testaments. When the church proclaims the word in the liturgy, it welcomes it as a way in which Christ is present: "It is he who speaks when the sacred Scriptures are read in church."⁴⁴

For this reason the word of God is so important in the celebration of the liturgy⁴⁵ that the holy Scripture must not be replaced by any other text, no matter how venerable it maybe.⁴⁶ Likewise the Bible is the indispensable source of the liturgy's language, of its signs and of its prayer, especially in the psalms.⁴⁷

24. Since the church is the fruit of Christ's sacrifice, the liturgy is always the celebration of the paschal mystery of Christ, the glorification of

God the Father and the sanctification of mankind by the power of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁸ Christian worship thus finds its most fundamental expression when every Sunday throughout the whole world Christians gather around the altar under the leadership of the priest, celebrate the eucharist, listen to the word of God, and recall the death and resurrection of Christ, while awaiting his coming in glory.⁴⁹ Around this focal point, the paschal mystery is made present in different ways in the celebration of each of the sacraments.

25. The whole life of the liturgy gravitates in the first place around the eucharistic sacrifice and the other sacraments given by Christ to his church.⁵⁰ The church has the duty to transmit them carefully and faithfully to every generation. In virtue of its pastoral authority, the church can make dispositions to provide for the good of the faithful, according to circumstances, times and places.⁵¹ But it has no power over the things which are directly related to the will of Christ and which constitute the unchangeable part of the liturgy.⁵² To break the link that the sacraments have with Christ, who instituted them, and with the very beginnings of the church,⁵³ would no longer be to inculturate them, but to empty them of their substance.

26. The church of Christ is made present and signified in a given place and in a given time by the local or particular churches, which through the liturgy reveal the church in its true nature.⁵⁴

That is why every particular church must be united with the universal church not only in belief and sacraments, but also in those practices received through the church as part of the uninterrupted apostolic tradition.⁵⁵ This includes, for example, daily prayer,⁵⁶ sanctification of Sunday and the rhythm of the week, the celebration of Easter and the unfolding of the mystery of Christ throughout the liturgical year,⁵⁷ the practice of penance and fasting,⁵⁸ the sacraments of Christian initiation, the celebration of the memorial of the Lord and the relationship between the Liturgy of the Word and the eucharistic liturgy, the forgiveness of sins, the ordained ministry, marriage and the anointing of the sick.

27. In the liturgy the faith of the church is expressed in a symbolic and communitarian form: This explains the need for a legislative framework for the organization of worship, the preparation of texts and the celebration of rites.⁵⁹ The reason for the preceptive character of this legislation throughout the centuries and still today is to ensure the orthodoxy of worship: that is to say, not only to avoid errors, but also to pass on the faith in its integrity so that the "rule of prayer" (*lex orandi*) of the church may correspond to

"rule of faith" (*lex credendi*).⁶⁰

However deep inculturation may go, the liturgy cannot do without legislation and vigilance on the part of those who have received this re-

ponsibility in the church: the Apostolic See and, according to the prescriptions of the law, the episcopal conference for its territory and the bishop for his diocese.⁶¹

B. Preliminary Conditions for Inculturation of the Liturgy

28. The missionary tradition of the church has always sought to evangelize people in their own language. Often indeed, it was the first apostles of a country who wrote down languages which up till then had only been oral. And this is right, as it is by the mother language, which conveys the mentality and the culture of a people, that one can reach the soul, mold it in the Christian spirit and allow it to share more deeply in the prayer of the church.⁶²

After the first evangelization, the proclamation of the word of God in the language of a country remains very useful for the people in their liturgical celebrations. The translation of the Bible, or at least of the biblical texts used in the liturgy, is the first necessary step in the process of the inculturation of the liturgy.⁶³

So that the word of God may be received in a right and fruitful way, "it is necessary to foster a taste for holy Scripture, as is witnessed by the ancient traditions of the rites of both East and West."⁶⁴ Thus inculturation of the liturgy presupposes the reception of the sacred Scripture into a given culture.⁶⁵

29. The different situations in which the church finds itself are an important factor in judging the degree of liturgical inculturation that is necessary. The situation of countries that were

evangelized centuries ago and where the Christian faith continues to influence the culture is different from countries which were evangelized more recently or where the Gospel has not penetrated deeply into cultural values.⁶⁶ Different again is the situation of a church where Christians are a minority of the population. A more complex situation is found when the population has different languages and cultures. A precise evaluation of the situation is necessary in order to achieve satisfactory solutions.

30. To prepare an inculturation of the liturgy, episcopal conferences should call upon people who are competent both in the liturgical tradition of the Roman rite and in the appreciation of local cultural values. Preliminary studies of a historical, anthropological, exegetical and theological character are necessary. But these need to be examined in the light of the pastoral experience of the local clergy, especially those born in the country.⁶⁷ The advice of "wise people" of the country, whose human wisdom is enriched by the light of the Gospel, would also be valuable. Liturgical inculturation should try to satisfy the needs of traditional culture⁶⁸ and at the same time take account of the needs of those affected by an urban and industrial culture.

C. The Responsibility of the Episcopal Conference

31. Since it is a question of local culture, it is understandable that the constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* assigned special responsibility in this matter to the "various kinds of competent territorial bodies of bishops legitimately established."⁶⁹ In regard to this, episcopal conferences must consider "carefully and prudently what elements taken from the traditions and cultures of individual peoples may properly be admitted into divine worship."⁷⁰ They can sometimes introduce "into the liturgy such elements as are not bound up with superstition and error ... provided they are in keeping with the true and authentic spirit of the liturgy."⁷¹

32. Conferences may determine, according to the procedure given below (cf. Nos. 62 and 65-69), whether the introduction into the liturgy

of elements borrowed from the social and religious rites of a people, and which form a living part of their culture, will enrich their understanding of liturgical actions without producing negative effects on their faith and piety. They will always be careful to avoid the danger of introducing elements that might appear to the faithful as the return to a period before evangelization (cf. below No. 47).

In any case, if changes in rites or texts are judged to be necessary, they must be harmonized with the rest of the liturgical life and, before being put into practice, still more before being made mandatory, they should first be presented to the clergy and then to the faithful in such a way as to avoid the danger of troubling them without good reason (cf. below, Nos. 46 and 69).

III. Principles and Practical Norms for Inculturation of the Roman Rite

33. As particular churches, especially the young churches, deepen their understanding of the liturgical heritage they have received from the Roman church which gave them birth, they will be able in turn to find in their own cultural heritage appropriate forms which can be integrated into the Roman rite where this is judged useful and necessary.

The liturgical formation of the faithful and the clergy, which is called for by the constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*,⁷² ought to help them to understand the meaning of the texts and the rites given in the present liturgical books. Often this will mean that elements which come from the tradition of the Roman rite do not have to be changed or suppressed.

A. General Principles

34. In the planning and execution of the inculturation of the Roman rite, the following points should be kept in mind: 1) the goal of inculturation; 2) the substantial unity of the Roman rite; 3) the competent authority.

35. The goal which should guide the inculturation of the Roman rite is that laid down by the Second Vatican Council as the basis of the general restoration of the liturgy: "Both texts and rites should be so drawn up that they express more clearly the holy things they signify and so that the Christian people, as far as possible, may be able to understand them with ease and to take part in the rites fully, actively and as befits a community."⁷³

Rites also need "to be adapted to the capacity of the faithful and that there should not be a need for numerous explanations for them to be understood."⁷⁴ However, the nature of the liturgy always has to be borne in mind, as does the biblical and traditional character of its structure and the particular way in which it is expressed (cf. above Nos. 21-27).

36. The process of inculturation should maintain the substantial unity of the Roman rite.⁷⁵ This unity is currently expressed in the typical editions of liturgical books published by authority of the

supreme pontiff and in the liturgical books approved by the episcopal conferences for their areas and confirmed by the Apostolic See.⁷⁶ The work of inculturation does not foresee the creation of new families of rites; inculturation responds to the needs of a particular culture and leads to adaptations which still remain part of the Roman rite.⁷⁷

37. Adaptations of the Roman rite, even in the field of inculturation, depend completely on the authority of the church. This authority belongs to the Apostolic See, which exercises it through the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments;⁷⁸ it also belongs, within the limits fixed by law, to episcopal conferences⁷⁹ and to the diocesan bishop.⁸⁰ "No other person, not even if he is a priest, may on his own initiative add, remove or change anything in the liturgy."⁸¹ Inculturation is not left to the personal initiative of celebrants or to the collective initiative of an assembly.⁸²

Likewise concessions granted to one region cannot be extended to other regions without the necessary authorization, even if an episcopal conference considers that there are sufficient reasons for adopting such measures in its own area.

B. Adaptations Which Can Be Made

38. In an analysis of a liturgical action with a view to its inculturation, it is necessary to consider the traditional value of the elements of the action and in particular their biblical or patristic origin (cf. above Nos. 21-26), because it is not sufficient to distinguish between what can be changed and what is unchangeable.

39. Language, which is a means of communi-

cation between people. In liturgical celebrations its purpose is to announce to the faithful the good news of salvation⁸³ and to express the church's prayer to the Lord. For this reason it must always express, along with the truths of the faith, the grandeur and holiness of the mysteries which are being celebrated.

Careful consideration therefore needs to be

given to determine which elements in the language of the people can properly be introduced into liturgical celebrations, and in particular whether it is suitable or not to use expressions from non-Christian religions. It is just as important to take account of the different literary genres used in the liturgy: biblical texts, presidential prayers, psalmody, acclamations, refrains, responsories, hymns and litanies.

The gestures and postures of the assembly are signs of its unity and express its active participation and foster the spiritual attitude of the participant. Each culture will choose those gestures and bodily postures which express the attitude of humanity before God, giving them a Christian significance, having some relationship, if possible, with the gestures and postures of the Bible.

40. Music and singing, which express the soul of people, have pride of place in the liturgy. And so singing must be promoted, in the first place singing the liturgical text, so that the voices of the faithful may be heard in the liturgical actions themselves.⁸⁴ "In some parts of the world, especially mission lands, there are people who have their own musical traditions, and these play a great part in their religious and social life. Due importance is to be attached to their music and a suitable place given to it, not only in forming their attitude toward religion, but also in adapting worship to their native genius."⁸⁵

It is important to note that a text which is sung is more deeply engraved in the memory than when it is read, which means that it is necessary to be demanding about the biblical and liturgical inspiration and the literary quality of texts which are meant to be sung.

Musical forms, melodies and musical instruments could be used in divine worship as long as they "are suitable, or can be made suitable, for sacred use, and provided they are in accord with the dignity of the place of worship and truly contribute to the uplifting of the faithful."⁸⁶

41. The liturgy is an action, and so gesture and posture are especially important. Those which belong to the essential rites of the sacraments and which are required for their validity must be preserved just as they have been approved or determined by the supreme authority of

the church.⁸⁷

The gestures and postures of the celebrating priest must express his special function: He presides over the assembly in the person of Christ.⁸⁸

The gestures and postures of the assembly are signs of its unity and express its active participation and foster the spiritual attitude of the participants.⁸⁹ Each culture will choose those gestures and bodily postures which express the attitude of humanity before God, giving them a Christian significance, having some relationship if possible, with the gestures and postures of the Bible.

42. Among some peoples, singing is instinctively accompanied by handclapping, rhythmic swaying and dance movements on the part of the participants. Such forms of external expression can have a place in the liturgical actions of these peoples on condition that they are always the expression of true communal prayer of adoration, praise, offering and supplication, and not simply a performance.

43. The liturgical celebration is enriched by the presence of art, which helps the faithful to celebrate, meet God and pray. Art in the church, which is made up of all peoples and nations, should enjoy the freedom of expression as long as it enhances the beauty of the buildings and liturgical rites, investing them with the respect and honor which is their due.⁹⁰ The arts should also be truly significant in the life and tradition of the people. The same applies to the shape, location and decoration of the altar,⁹¹ the place for the proclamation of the word of God⁹² and for baptism,⁹³ all the liturgical furnishings, vessels, vestments and colors.⁹⁴ Preference should be given to materials, forms and colors which are in use in the country.

44. The constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* has firmly maintained the constant practice of the church of encouraging the veneration by the faithful of images of Christ, the Virgin Mary and the saints,⁹⁵ because the honor "given to the image is given to its subject."⁹⁶ In different cultures believers can be helped in their prayer and in their spiritual life by seeing works of art which attempt, according to the genius of the people, to express the divine mysteries.

45. Alongside liturgical celebrations and related to them, in some particular churches there are various manifestations of popular devotion. These were sometimes introduced by missionaries at the time of the initial evangelization, and they often develop according to local custom.

The introduction of devotional practices into liturgical celebrations under the pretext of inculturation cannot be allowed "because by its nature,

(the liturgy) is superior to them."⁹⁷ It belongs to the local ordinary⁹⁸ to organize such devotions, to encourage them as supports for the life and faith of Christians, and to purify them when necessary,

because they need to be constantly permeated by the Gospel.⁹⁹ He will take care to ensure that they do not replace liturgical celebrations or become mixed up with them.¹⁰⁰

C. Necessary Prudence

46. "Innovations should only be made when the good of the church genuinely and certainly requires them; care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing."¹⁰¹ This norm was given in the constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* in relation to the restoration of the liturgy, and it also applies, in due measure, to the inculturation of the Roman rite. In this field changes need to be gradual and adequate explanation given in order to avoid the danger of rejection or simply an artificial grafting onto previous forms.

"Innovations should only be made when the good of the church genuinely and certainly requires them; care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing."

47. The liturgy is the expression of faith and Christian life, and so it is necessary to ensure that liturgical inculturation is not marked, even in appearance, by religious syncretism. This would be the case if the places of worship, the liturgical objects and vestments, gestures and postures let it appear as if rites had the same significance in Christian celebrations as they did before evangelization. The syncretism will be still worse if biblical readings and chants (cf. above No. 26) or the prayers were replaced by texts from other religions, even if these contain an undeniable religious and moral value.¹⁰²

48. The constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* envisaged the admission of rites or gestures according to local custom into rituals of Christian initiation, marriage and funerals.¹⁰³ This is a stage of inculturation, but there is also the danger that the truth of the Christian rite and the expression of the Christian faith could be easily diminished in the eyes of the faithful. Fidelity to traditional

usages must be accompanied by purification and, if necessary, a break with the past. The same applies, for example, to the possibility of Christianizing pagan festivals or holy places, or to the priest using the signs of authority reserved to the heads of civil society or for the veneration of ancestors. In every case it is necessary to avoid any ambiguity. Obviously the Christian liturgy cannot accept magic rites, superstition, spiritism, vengeance or rites with a sexual connotation.

49. In a number of countries there are several cultures which coexist and sometimes influence each other in such a way as to lead gradually to the formation of a new culture, while at times they seek to affirm their proper identity or even oppose each other in order to stress their own existence. It can happen that customs may have little more than folkloric interest. The episcopal conference will examine each case individually with care: They should respect the riches of each culture and those who defend them, but they should not ignore or neglect a minority culture with which they are not familiar. They should weigh the risk of a Christian community becoming inward looking and also the use of inculturation for political ends. In those countries with a customary culture, account must also be taken of the extent to which modernization has affected the people.

50. Sometimes there are many languages in use in the one country, even though each one may be spoken only by a small group of persons or a single tribe. In such cases a balance must be found which respects the individual rights of these groups or tribes but without carrying to extremes the localization of the liturgical celebrations. It is also sometimes possible that a country may be moving toward the use of a principal language.

51. To promote liturgical inculturation in a cultural area bigger than one country, the episcopal conferences concerned must work together and decide the measures which have to be taken so that "as far as possible, there are not notable ritual differences in regions bordering on one another."¹⁰⁴

IV. Areas of Adaptation in the Roman Rite

52. The constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* had in mind an inculturation of the Roman rite when it gave norms for the adaptation of the liturgy to the mentality and needs of different peoples, when it provided for a degree of adapta-

tion in the liturgical books (cf. below Nos. 53-61), and also when it envisaged the possibility of more profound adaptations in some circumstances, especially in mission countries (cf. below Nos. 63-64).

A. Adaptations in the Liturgical Books

53. The first significant measure of inculturation is the translation of liturgical books into the language of the people.¹⁰⁵ The completion of translations and their revision, where necessary, should be effected according to the directives given by the Holy See on this subject.¹⁰⁶ Different literary genres are to be respected, and the content of the texts of the Latin typical edition is to be preserved; at the same time the translations must be understandable to participants (cf. above No. 39), suitable for proclamation and singing, with appropriate responses and acclamations by the assembly.

All peoples, even the most primitive, have a religious language which is suitable for expressing prayer, but liturgical language has its own special characteristics: It is deeply impregnated by the Bible; certain words in current Latin use (*memoria*, *sacramentum*) took on a new meaning in the Christian faith. Certain Christian expressions can be transmitted from one language to another, as has happened in the past, for example in the case of *ecclesia*, *evangelium*, *baptisma*, *eucharistia*.

Moreover, translators must be attentive to the relationship between the text and the liturgical action, aware of the needs of oral communication and sensitive to the literary qualities of the living language of the people. The qualities needed for liturgical translations are also required in the case of new compositions, when they are envisaged.

54. For the celebration of the eucharist, the Roman Missal, "while allowing ... for legitimate differences and adaptations according to the prescriptions of the Second Vatican Council, "must remain "a sign and instrument of unity"¹⁰⁷ of the Roman rite in different languages. The General Instruction on the Roman Missal foresees that "in accordance with the constitution on the liturgy, each conference of bishops has the power to lay down norms for its own territory that are suited to the traditions and character of peoples, regions and different communities."¹⁰⁸ The same

also applies to the gestures and postures of the faithful,¹⁰⁹ the ways in which the altar and the book of the Gospels are venerated,¹¹⁰ the texts of the opening chants,¹¹¹ the song at the preparation of the gifts¹¹² and the communion song,¹¹³ the rite of peace,¹¹⁴ conditions regulating communion with the chalice,¹¹⁵ the materials for the construction of the altar and liturgical furniture,¹¹⁶ the material and form of sacred vessels,¹¹⁷ liturgical vestments.¹¹⁸ Episcopal conferences can also determine the manner of distributing communion.¹¹⁹

55. For the other sacraments and for sacramentals, the Latin typical edition of each ritual indicates the adaptations which pertain to the episcopal conferences¹²⁰ or to individual bishops in particular circumstances.¹²¹ These adaptations concern texts, gestures and sometimes the ordering of the rite. When the typical edition gives alternative formulas, conferences of bishops can add other formulas of the same kind.

56. For the rites of Christian initiation, episcopal conferences are "to examine with care and prudence what can properly be admitted from the traditions and character of each people"¹²² and "in mission countries to judge whether initiation ceremonies practiced among the people can be adapted into the rite of Christian initiation and to decide whether they should be used."¹²³ It is necessary to remember, however, that the term *initiation* does not have the same meaning or designate the same reality when it is used of social rites of initiation among certain peoples or when it is contrary to the process of Christian initiation, which leads through the rites of the catechumenate to incorporation into Christ in the church by means of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and eucharist.

57. In many places it is the marriage rite that calls for the greatest degree of adaptation so as not to be foreign to social customs. To adapt it to the customs of different regions and peoples, each episcopal conference has the "faculty to prepare

its own proper marriage rite, which must always conform to the law which requires that the ordained minister or the assisting layperson,¹²⁴ according to the case, must ask for and obtain the consent of the contracting parties and give them the nuptial blessing."¹²⁵ This proper rite must obviously bring out clearly the Christian meaning of marriage, emphasize the grace of the sacrament and underline the duties of the spouses.¹²⁶

58. Among all peoples, funerals are always surrounded with special rites, often of great expressive value. To answer to the needs of different countries, the Roman Ritual offers several forms of funerals.¹²⁷ Episcopal conferences must choose those which correspond best to local customs.¹²⁸ They will wish to preserve all that is good in family traditions and local customs, and ensure that funeral rites manifest the Christian faith in the resurrection and bear witness to the true values of the Gospel.¹²⁹ It is in this perspective that funeral rituals can incorporate the customs of different cultures and respond as best they can to the needs and traditions of each region.¹³⁰

59. The blessing of persons, places or things touches the everyday life of the faithful and answers their immediate needs. They offer many possibilities for adaptation, for maintaining local customs and admitting popular usages.¹³¹ Episcopal conferences will be able to employ the foreseen dispositions and be attentive to the needs of the country.

60. As regards the liturgical year, each particular church and religious family adds its own celebrations to those of the universal church, after

approval by the Apostolic See.¹³² Episcopal conferences can also, with the prior approval of the Apostolic See, suppress the obligation of certain feasts or transfer them to a Sunday.¹³³ They also decide the time and manner of celebrating rogationtide and ember days.¹³⁴

61. The Liturgy of the Hours has as its goal the praise of God and the sanctification by prayer of the day and all human activity. Episcopal conferences can make adaptations in the second reading of the office of readings, hymns and intercessions and in the final Marian antiphons.¹³⁵

Procedure

62. When an episcopal conference prepares its own edition of liturgical books, it decides about the translations and also the adaptations which are envisaged by the law.¹³⁶ The acts of the conference, together with the final vote, are signed by the president and secretary of the conference and sent to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, along with two copies of the approved text.

Moreover along with the complete dossier should be sent:

a) A succinct and precise explanation of the reasons for the adaptations that have been introduced.

b) Indications as to which sections have been taken from other already approved liturgical books and which are newly composed. After the recognition by the Apostolic See has been received according to the law,¹³⁷ the episcopal conference promulgates the decree and determines the date when the new text comes into force.

B. Adaptations Envisaged By No. 40 of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy

63. Apart from the adaptations provided for in the liturgical books, it may be that "in some places and circumstances an even more radical adaptation of the liturgy is needed, and this entails greater difficulties."¹³⁸ This is more than the sort of adaptations envisaged by the general instructions and the *praenotanda* of the liturgical books.

It presupposes that an episcopal conference has exhausted all the possibilities of adaptation offered by the liturgical books; that it has made an evaluation of the adaptations already introduced and maybe revised them before proceeding to more far-reaching adaptations.

The desirability or need for an adaptation of this sort can emerge in one of the areas mentioned above (cf. Nos. 53-61) without the others

being affected. Moreover, adaptations of this kind do not envisage a transformation of the Roman rite, but are made within the context of the Roman rite.

64. In some places when there are still problems about the participation of the faithful, a bishop or several bishops can set out their difficulties to their colleagues in the episcopal conference and examine with them the desirability of introducing more profound adaptations, if the good of souls truly requires it.¹³⁹

It is the function of episcopal conferences to propose to the Apostolic See the modifications it wishes to adopt following the procedure set out below.¹⁴⁰

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments is ready to receive

the proposals of episcopal conferences and examine them, keeping in mind the good of the local churches concerned and the common good of the universal church, and to assist the process of inculturation where it is desirable or necessary. It will do this in accordance with the principles laid down in this instruction (cf. above, Nos. 33-51), and in a spirit of confident collaboration and shared responsibility.

Procedure

65. The episcopal conference will examine what has to be modified in liturgical celebrations because of the traditions and mentality of peoples. It will ask the national or regional liturgical commission to study the matter and examine the different aspects of the elements of local culture and their eventual inclusion in the liturgical celebrations. The commission is to ensure that it receives the appropriate expert advice. It may be sometimes opportune to ask the advice of members of non-Christian religions about the religious or civil value of this or that element (cf. above Nos. 30-32).

If the situation requires it, this preliminary examination will be made in collaboration with the episcopal conferences of neighboring countries or those with the same culture (cf. above Nos. 33-51).

66. The episcopal conference will present the proposal to the congregation before any experimentation takes place. The presentation should include a description of the innovations proposed, the reasons for their adoption, the criteria used, the times and places chosen for a preliminary experiment and an indication which groups will

make it, and finally the acts of the discussion and the vote of the conference.

After an examination of the proposal carried out together by the episcopal conference and the congregation, the latter will grant the episcopal conference a faculty to make an experiment for a definite period of time, where this is appropriate.¹⁴¹

67. The episcopal conference will supervise the process of experimentation,¹⁴² normally with the help of the national or regional liturgical commission. The conference will also take care to ensure that the experimentation does not exceed the limits of time and place that were fixed. It will also ensure pastors and the faithful know about the limited and provisional nature of the experiment, and it will not give it publicity of a sort which could have an effect on the liturgical practice of the country. At the end of the period of experimentation, the episcopal conference will decide whether it matches up to the goal that was proposed or whether it needs revision, and it will communicate its conclusions to the congregation along with full information about the experiment.

68. After examining the dossier, the congregation will issue a decree giving its consent, possibly with some qualifications, so that the changes can be introduced into the territory covered by the episcopal conference.

69. The faithful, both lay people and clergy, should be well informed about the changes and prepared for their introduction into the liturgical celebrations. The changes are to be put into effect as circumstances require, with a transition period if this is appropriate (cf. above No. 61).

Conclusion

70. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments presents these rules to the episcopal conferences to govern the work of liturgical inculturation envisaged by the Second Vatican Council as a response to the pastoral needs of peoples of different cultures. Liturgical inculturation should be carefully integrated into a pastoral plan for the inculturation of the Gospel into the many different human situations that are to be found. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments hopes that each particular church, especially the young churches, will discover that the diversity of certain elements of liturgical celebrations can be a source of enrichment, while re-

specting the substantial unity of the Roman rite, the unity of the whole church and the integrity of the faith transmitted to the saints for all time (cf. Jude 3).

The present instruction was prepared by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, by order of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, who approved it and ordered that it be published.

From the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Jan. 25, 1994.

Cardinal Antonio M. Javierre Ortas / prefect
Archbishop Geraldo Agnelo / secretary

Notes

¹ Cf. No. 38; cf. also No. 40.

² Ibid., 37.

³ Cf. Vatican Council II, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 2; *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 3 and 4; Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1200-1206, especially 1204-1206.

⁴ Cf. Dec. 4, 1988, No. 16: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 81 (1989), 912.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Nos. 37-40.

⁷ John Paul II, encyclical *Slavorum Apostoli*, June 2, 1985, No. 21: AAS 77 (1985), 802-803; discourse to the Pontifical Council for Culture plenary assembly, Jan. 17, 1987, No. 5: AAS 79 (1987), 1204-1205.

⁸ John Paul II, encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, Dec. 7, 1990, No. 52: AAS 83 (1991), 300.

⁹ Cf. ibid and Synod of Bishops, Final Report *Exeunte Coetu Secundo*, Dec. 7, 1985, D 4.

¹⁰ *Redemptoris Missio*, 52.

¹¹ Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 58.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Cf. John Paul II, apostolic exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, Oct. 16, 1979, No. 53: AAS 71 (1979), 1319.

¹⁴ Cf. Eastern Code of Canon Law, Canon 584.2: "*Evangelizatio gentium ita fiat, ut servata integritate fidei et morum Evangelium se in cultura singulorum populorum exprimere possit, in catechesi scilicet, in ritibus propriis liturgicis, in arte sacra, in iure particulari ac demum in tota vita ecclesiali.*"

¹⁵ Cf. *Catechesi Tradendae*, 53: "Concerning evangelization in general, we can say that it is a call to bring the strength of the Gospel to the heart of culture and cultures.... It is in this way that it can propose to cultures the knowledge of the mystery hidden and help them to make of their own living tradition original expressions of life, celebration and Christian thought."

¹⁶ Cf. *Redemptoris Missio*, 52: "Inculturation is a slow process covering the whole of missionary life and involves all who are active in the mission *ad gentes*, and Christian communities in the measure that they are developing." Discourse to Pontifical Council for Culture plenary assembly: "I strongly reaffirm the need to mobilize the whole church into a creative effort toward a renewed evangelization of both people and cultures. It is only by a joint effort that the church will be able to bring the hope of Christ into the heart of cultures and present-day ways of thinking."

¹⁷ Cf. Pontifical Biblical Commission, *Foi et*

culture a la lumiere de la Bible, 1981; and International Theological Commission, "Faith and Inculturation," 1988.

¹⁸ Cf. John Paul II, discourse to the bishops of Zaire, April 12, 1983, No. 5: AAS 75 (1983), 620: "How is it that a faith which has truly matured, is deep and firm, does not succeed in expressing itself in a language, in a catechesis, in theological reflection, in prayer, in the liturgy, in art, in the institutions which are truly related to the African soul of your compatriots? There is the key to the important and complex question of the liturgy, to mention just one area. Satisfactory progress in this domain can only be the fruit of a progressive growth in faith, linked with spiritual discernment, theological clarity, a sense of the universal church."

¹⁹ Discourse to Pontifical Council for Culture, 5: "In coming into contact with the cultures, the church must welcome all that in the traditions of peoples is compatible with the Gospel, to give all the riches of Christ to them and to enrich itself of the varied wisdom of the nations of the earth."

²⁰ Cf. discourse to the Pontifical Council for Culture, 5; cf. also *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, 17.

²¹ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 19 and 35.

²² Cf. Vatican Council II, *Ad Gentes*, 10.

²³ *Gaudium et Spes*, 22.

²⁴ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *In Ioannem*, I, 14: *Patrologia Graeca* 73, 162C.

²⁵ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 5.

²⁶ Cf. Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, 10.

²⁷ Cf. Roman Missal, Fifth Weekday of the Passion of the Lord, 5: Prayer One: "...*per suum cruorem instituit paschale mysterium.*"

²⁸ Cf. Paul VI, apostolic letter *Mysterii Paschalis*, Feb. 14, 1969: AAS 61 (1969), 222-226.

²⁹ Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1096.

³⁰ Cf. ibid., 1200-1203.

³¹ Cf. Vatican Council II, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 14-15.

³² Texts: cf. the sources of the prayers, the prefaces and the eucharistic prayers of the Roman Missal; chants: for example the antiphons for Jan. 1, baptism of the Lord; Sept. 8, the Improperia of Good Friday, the hymns of the Liturgy of the Hours; gestures: for example the sprinkling of holy water, use of incense, genuflection, hands joined; rites: for example Palm Sunday procession, the adoration of the cross on Good Friday, the rogations.

³³ Cf. in the past St. Gregory the Great, Letter to Mellitus: Reg. XI, 59: CCL 140A, 961-962;

John VII, bull *Industriae Tuae*, June 26, 880: *Patrologia Latina* 126, 904; Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Instruction to the Apostolic Vicars of China and Indochina (1654): *Collectanea S.C. de Propaganda Fide*, I, 1, Rome, 1907, No. 135; instruction *Plane Comperitum*, Dec. 8, 1939: AAS 32 (1940), 24-26.

³⁴ *Lumen Gentium*, 17, also 13.

³⁵ Cf. *Catechesi Tradendae*, 52-53; *Redemptoris Missio*, 53-54; Catechism of the Catholic Church 1204-1206.

³⁶ Cf., also St. Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Magnesians, 9: Funk I, 199: "We have seen how former adherents of the ancient customs have since attained to a new hope; so that they have given up keeping the sabbath, and now order their lives by the Lord's day instead."

³⁷ Cf. Vatican Council II, *Dei Verbum*, 14-16; *Ordo Lectionum Missae*, ed. typica altera, *Praenotanda*, 5: "It is the same mystery of Christ that the church announces when she proclaims the Old and New Testament in the celebration of the liturgy. The New Testament is, indeed, hidden in the Old and, in the New the Old is revealed. Because Christ is the center and fullness of all Scripture, as also of the whole liturgical celebration"; Catechism of the Catholic Church, 120-123, 128-130, 1093-1095.

³⁸ Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1093-1096.

³⁹ *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, 7.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 5-7.

⁴¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 2; *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, 9.

⁴² Cf. Vatican Council II, "Presbyterorum Ordinis," 2.

⁴³ Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 48; *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 2 and 8.

⁴⁴ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7.

⁴⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 24.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Ordo Lectionem Missae, Praenotanda*, 12: "It is not allowed to suppress or reduce either the biblical readings in the celebration of Mass or the chants that are drawn from sacred Scripture. It is absolutely forbidden to replace these readings by other nonbiblical readings. It is through the word of God in the Scriptures that 'God continues to speak to his people' (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 33), and it is through familiarity with the Holy Scripture that the people of God, made docile by the Holy Spirit in the light of faith, can by their life and way of living witness to Christ before the whole world."

⁴⁷ Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2585-2589.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7.

⁴⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 6, 47, 56, 102, 106; cf. Roman

Missal, General Instruction, 1, 7, 8.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 6.

⁵¹ Cf. Council of Trent, Session 21, Chap. 2: Denz-Schonm. 1728; *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 48ff, 62ff.

⁵² Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 21.

⁵³ Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Inter Insigniores," Oct. 15, 1976: AAS 69 (1977), 107-108.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 28; also No. 26.

⁵⁵ Cf. St. Irenaeus, Against the Heresies, III, 2, 1-3; 3,1-2: *Sources Chretiennes*, 211, 24-31; cf. St. Augustine, Letter to Januarius 54, 1: PL 33, 200: "But regarding those other observances which we keep and all the world keeps, and which do not derive from Scripture but from tradition, we are given to understand that they have been ordained or recommended to be kept by the apostles themselves or by the plenary councils, whose authority is well founded in the church"; cf. *Redemptoris Missio*, 53-4; cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Letter to Bishops of the Catholic Church on Certain Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion, May 28 1992, Nos. 7-10.

⁵⁶ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 83.

⁵⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 102, 106 and Appendix.

⁵⁸ Cf. Paul VI, apostolic constitution "Paenitemini," Feb. 17, 1966: AAS 58 (1966), 177-198.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 22; 26; 28; 40, 3 and 128; Code of Canon Law, Canon 2 and "passim."

⁶⁰ Cf. Roman Missal, General Instruction, Prooemium, 2; Paul VI, discourse to the Consilium for the Application of the Constitution on the Liturgy, Oct. 13, 1966: AAS 58 (1966), 1146; Oct. 14, 1968: AAS 60 (1968), 734.

⁶¹ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 22; 36; 40; 44-46; Canons 47ff and 838.

⁶² Cf. "Redemptoris Missio," 53.

⁶³ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 35 and 36; Canon 825.1.

⁶⁴ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 24.

⁶⁵ Cf. *ibid.*; "Catechesi Tradendae," 55.

⁶⁶ In the constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* attention is drawn to Nos. 38 and 40: "above all in the missions."

⁶⁷ Cf. *Ad Gentes*, 16 and 17.

⁶⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 19.

⁶⁹ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 22; cf. *ibid.*, 39 and 40; Canons 447-448ff.

⁷⁰ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 40.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁷² Cf. *ibid.*, 14-19.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁷⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 34.

⁷⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 37-40.

⁷⁶ Cf. *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, 16.

⁷⁷ Cf. John Paul II, discourse to the plenary assembly of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Jan. 26, 1991, No. 3: AAS 83 (1991), 940: "This is not to suggest to the particular churches that they have a new task to undertake following the application of liturgical reform, that is to say, adaptation or inculturation. Nor is it intended to mean inculturation as the creation of alternative rites.... It is a question of collaborating so that the Roman rite, maintaining its own identity, may incorporate suitable adaptations."

⁷⁸ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 22; Canons 838.1 and 838.2; John Paul II, apostolic constitution "Pastor Bonus," 62, 64.3: AAS 80 (1988), 876-877; *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, 19.

⁷⁹ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 22 and Canons 447ff and 838.1 and 838.3; *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, 20.

⁸⁰ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 22, and Canons 838.1 and 838.4; *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, 21.

⁸¹ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 22.

⁸² The situation is different when, in the liturgical books published after the constitution, the introductions and the rubrics envisaged adaptations and the possibility of leaving a choice to the pastoral sensitivity of the one presiding, for example, when it says "if it is opportune," "in these or similar terms," "also," "according to circumstances," "either ... or," "if convenient," "normally," "the most suitable form can be chosen." In making a choice, the celebrant should seek the good of the assembly, taking into account the spiritual preparation and mentality of the participants rather than his own preferences or the easiest solution. In celebrations for particular groups, other possibilities are available. Nonetheless, prudence and discretion are always called for in order to avoid the breaking up of the local church into little "churches" or "chapels" closed in upon themselves.

⁸³ Cf. Canons 762-772, especially 769.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 118; also No. 54: While allowing that "a suitable place be allotted to the language of the country" in the chants, "steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or sign together in Latin those parts of the ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them, "especially the Our Father, cf. Roman Missal, General Instruction, 19.

⁸⁵ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 119.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁸⁷ Cf. Canon 841.

⁸⁸ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 33; Canon 899.2.

⁸⁹ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 30.

⁹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 123-124; Canon 1216.

⁹¹ Cf. Roman Missal, General Instruction, 259-270; Canons 1235-1239, especially 1236.

⁹² Cf. Roman Missal, General Instruction, 272.

⁹³ Cf. *De Benedictionibus, Ordo Benedictionis Baptisteriiseu Fontis Baptismalis*, 832-837.

⁹⁴ Cf. Roman Missal, General Instruction, 287-310.

⁹⁵ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 125; *Lumen Gentium*, 67; Canon 1188.

⁹⁶ Council of Nicea II: Denz.-Schonm. 601; cf. St. Basil, "On the Holy Spirit," XVIII, 45; *Sources Chretiennes*, 17, 194.

⁹⁷ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 13.

⁹⁸ Cf. Canon 839.2.

⁹⁹ *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, 18.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 23.

¹⁰² These texts can be used profitably in the homily because it is one of the tasks of the homily "to show the points of convergence between revealed divine wisdom and noble human thought, seeking the truth by various paths" (John Paul II, apostolic letter *Dominicae Cena*e, Feb. 24, 1980, No. 10: AAS 72 (1980), 137.

¹⁰³ Nos. 65, 77, 81. Cf. *Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adulorum, Praenotanda*, 30-31, 79-81, 88-89; *Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium*, editio typica altera, Praenotanda, 41-44; *Ordo Exsequiarum*, Praenotanda, 21-22.

¹⁰⁴ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 23.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 36; 54; 63.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, 20.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Paul VI, apostolic constitution *Missale Romanum*, April 3, 1969: AAS 61 (1969), 221.

¹⁰⁸ Roman Missal, General Instruction, 6; cf. also *Ordo Lectionum Missae*, editio typica altera, Praenotanda, 111-118.

¹⁰⁹ Roman Missal, General Instruction, 22.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 232.

¹¹¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 26.

¹¹² Cf. *ibid.*, 50.

¹¹³ Cf. *ibid.*, 56 i.

¹¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 56 b.

¹¹⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 242.

¹¹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 263 and 288.

¹¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 290.

¹¹⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 304, 305, 308.

¹¹⁹ Cf. *De Sacra Communionem et de Cultu Mysterii Eucharistici Extra Missam*, Praenotanda, 21.

¹²⁰ Cf. *Ordo Initiationis Christianae*

Adultorum, Praenotanda Generalia, 30-33; Praenotanda, 12, 20, 47, 64-65; Ordo, 312; Appendix, 12; *Ordo Baptismi Parvulorum*, Praenotanda, 8, 23-25; *Ordo Confirmationis*, Praenotanda, 11-12, 16-17; *De Sacra Communione et de Cultu Mysteriorum Eucharistici Extra Missam*, Praenotanda, 12; *Ordo Paenitentiae*, Praenotanda, 35b, 38; *Ordo Unctionis Infirmorum Eorumque Pastoralis Curae*, Praenotanda, 38-39; *Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium*, editio typica altera, Praenotanda, 39-44; *De Ordinatione Episcopi, Presbyterorum et Diaconorum*, editio typica altera, Praenotanda, 11; *De Benedictionibus*, Praenotanda Generalia, 39.

¹²¹ Cf. *Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum*, Praenotanda, 66; *Ordo Baptismi Parvulorum*, Praenotanda, 26; *Ordo Paenitentiae*, Praenotanda, 39; *Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium*, editio typica altera, Praenotanda, 36.

¹²² *Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum*, *Ordo Baptismi Parvulorum*, Praenotanda Generalis, 30.2.

¹²³ Ibid., 31; cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 65.

¹²⁴ Cf. Canons 1108 and 1112.

¹²⁵ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 77; *Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium*, editio typica altera, Praenotanda, 42.

¹²⁶ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 77.

¹²⁷ Cf. *Ordo Exsequiarum*, Praenotanda, 4.

¹²⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 9 and 21.1-21.3.

¹²⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 2.

¹³⁰ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 81.

¹³¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 79; *De Benedictionibus*, Praenotanda Generalia, 39; *Ordo Professionis Religiosae*, Praenotanda, 12-15.

¹³² Cf. *Normae Universales de Anno Liturgico et de Calendario*, 49, 55; Congregation for Divine Worship, instruction *Calendaria Particularia*, June 24, 1970: AAS, 62 (1970), 349-370.

¹³³ Cf. Canon 1246.2.

¹³⁴ Cf. *Normae Universales de Anno Liturgico et de Calendario*, 46.

¹³⁵ *Liturgia Horarum*, Institutio Generalis, 92, 162, 178, 184.

¹³⁶ Cf. Canons 455.2 and 838.3; that is also the case for a new edition, cf. *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, 20.

¹³⁷ Canon 838.3.

¹³⁸ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 40.

¹³⁹ Cf. Congregation for Bishops, Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops, Feb. 22, 1973, No. 84.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 40.

¹⁴¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 40.

¹⁴² Cf. *ibid.*

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